RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

The occurrence of two or three railway accidents, either simultaneously or in rapid succession, frequently elicit valuable suggestions, and sometimes significant hints from those in authority. Such has been the case lately on the occasion of two great concussions in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, both of them originating in the purest negligence.

On the South-Eastern line, a train having been allowed to go away without its signal lights at the back, was in jeopardy from the possibility of an engine running into it; and an engine was accordingly sent off to realize the fear that was entertained. It is impossible to conceive any thing more grossly stupid than dispatching an engine at a rapid rate after a train which was only in danger from the chance of any thing coming behind it. Going away without the lights would have been, as it happened, of no consequence, for the train was the last for the day. It was only by dispatching a special engine, that mischief could be done.

On the London and Birmingham line, the morning was misty, and there was consequently more than ordinary danger in allowing the trains to be either later or earlier than usual. It was difficult to see further than a few yards; and by way of meeting the difficulty, the mail train was hurried forward till it came into violent collision with the luggage train. This, too, went out later than on ordinary occasions; though, as we have already said, the obscurity of the morning rendered exactness in all the arrangements on the line particularly requisite. Such are the usual causes of all railway accidents; for by a strange perverseness, whenever there seems to be a necessity for increased care, the persons employed on a line are guilty of increased negligence.

Mr. Bernal, a few evenings since, very properly called the attention of the House of Commons to the subject, when Sir G. Clerk observed: "that although the Board of Trade generally found that any suggestions they made were attended to by the companies, yet they had no power whatever to enforce compliance. It might certainly be hereafter necessary to impose some more efficient check on the railway companies for the prevention of accidents."

Sir Robert Peel also took occasion to say and with more than usual emphasis: "It is constantly urged that the accidents by railways bear no proportion whatever to those which used to occur by stage coaches. That is no answer—it is a mere sophistication. We have a right to be insured that those who derive the profits from these railways shall take every possible precaution on behalf of the public. If by the employment of ill-qualified subordinate officers these accidents are rendered more likely to happen or more frequent, then it will be the duty of Parliament to step in and demand a reduction of the profits of those who are concerned in the railway, in order that the due precautions may be taken to insure the public safety."

The Association of Architectural Draughtsmen.—At the last meeting of the Association, Mr. Colling read a paper upon the churches of Norfolk, pointing out their peculiarities: the subject was illustrated by many original sketches and drawings. Trunch, Ludham, and Knapton churches give ample scope for the research of the antiquary or architect. The roofs of several of the buildings noticed are well calculated to produce admiration, and the number and fidelity of their illustrations entitle Mr. Colling to praise for his industry. A proof of a lithograph of one of his quarterly subscription drawings was brought forward, to a copy of which each member is entitled. The Committee projects an exhibition of architectural drawings; if decided upon, it will open for a week upon the 1st September, the day of the *third* anniversary dinner.

The British Museum.—Last week the whole of the eastern wing of this building was disposed of by auction, in order to be removed for the erection of the new stone wing, to correspond with that on the western side, which is now finished. The foundation for the intended wing has been laid some weeks.

THE GLASS TRADE.

We receive many complaints of the conduct of the English glass makers in keeping the price of that material much higher than it should be. They may be assured that they are acting most unwisely; they will induce fresh competitors to come into the trade, and lead buyers to the foreign markets, whence they may not be able to wean them hereafter. The *Gardeners' Chronicle* invites attention to the fact, that an agency for the sale of foreign glass has actually been established in London, and that any quantity, from a single square up to as much as would glaze a village, may be procured by all purchasers. "We have examined that glass, and can say that it is excellent. It is as good in quality as English sheet glass, called the second quality of No. 1; and thus far better—that the English glass weighs only 16 ounces to the foot, while this glass averages 18 ounces, a very important difference.

As to the price, we find the difference to amount to this. We quote English prices from the tariff circulated by Messrs. Chater and Hayward.

	English glass 16 oz. to the foot.	Foreign glass 18 oz. to the foot.	Difference against the English glass, and in favour of the buyer of foreign glass.
6 by 4, and under 9 by 7	0s. 9d.	5d.	4d.
9 by 7, and under 12 by 10 ..	0 10	5	5
12 by 10, and under 24	1 1	5	8
24 to 36 inches.....	1 2	5	9

And if larger sizes are required, the only increase in price is 2d. a foot, up to the greatest dimension made abroad, which we believe is much beyond any thing that can be required for glazing purposes.

And here we see one of the most striking differences between the system of glass dealing in England and on the continent. An English glass-cutter tells you that he cannot cut you a square of glass 9½ inches long, and 7½ inches wide, unless you give him 1d. a foot more for it than if it is 9 inches long and 7 inches wide. He sets out by charging in the first place 9d. a foot for little pieces of glass worth 2d. or 3d. If half an inch is added he claps on a 1d. more, until you arrive at the magnificent dimensions of 12 inches one way and 10 the other; for that you must pay 3d. a foot more. And so he goes on adding 2d. a foot, till at last, by this ingenious manœuvre, he contrives to extract 2s. 3d. out of his customer's pocket, for that which is worth 3d.; or, taking his own exorbitant standard of value, he converts that which he admits to be worth only 9d. into 2s. 3d. Our calculating powers are unable to determine how many thousands per cent. are pocketed by this scheme. That it is a mere scheme of trade is quite clear from the foreign practice. Messrs. Testa and Co. publicly advertized, that if their glass is under 40 inches long, they must have 14 francs *per* 100 *feet*, and if it is more than 40 inches long they must have 17 francs *per* 100 *feet*. This is a very reasonable advance, the necessity for which is intelligible. But the English glass trade say that they must have from 1d. to 3s. *a foot* extra. So that an English glass-dealer requires a greater advance upon a single foot of glass than a foreign dealer finds it necessary upon 100 feet."

Ordinary English glass can be had cheaper than is stated above, but not so cheaply as it should be, and as manufacturers would find it to their interest to make it.

St. Peter's at Rome.—We learn from *Galignani* that the dome of this celebrated edifice has excited serious alarm. For a long time past, the cupola has been cracked in many places, and ten arches of iron, weighing 60,000 kilogrammes, have been placed so as to prevent its fall. It has just been discovered that the lanternino, above which rises the cross that crowns the edifice, is cracked through and through. The numerous lightning conductors, which had been erected by Pope Pius VII. for the protection of the edifice, remove all idea of this mischief having been the effect of a thunder-storm. The lanternino is being surrounded by heavy iron chains, to prevent the cracks from extending.

Correspondence.

THE NEW DOORS FOR YORK MINSTER.

Sir,—In your valuable publication of the 15th July, I observed a letter from Mr. F. Tyrrell, of Tynemouth, near Newcastle, relative to the execution of three new doors for the west front of York Minster. Mr. Tyrrell is strictly correct in stating that the doors were originally made by Messrs. Scott and Wallace, of Newcastle. He says he considers it is only justice to name by whom the work was executed. I quite coincide in this opinion, but at the same time beg to state that when the doors arrived at York Minster, they were minutely inspected by Mr. Sydney Smirke, the architect for the restoration of the nave, and that that gentleman then distinctly declared "that he could not sanction the execution of the carving," and ordered Messrs. Scott and Wallace to take it all off the doors, and replace it by some other carving of superior quality. The contractors reluctantly renewed the carving, but only upon the lower part of the doors, where it now remains for the inspection of the curious; and they having subsequently refused to renew the carving upon the upper part of the doors, Mr. S. Smirke contracted with two of my fellow-citizens, viz., Mr. John Wolstenholme, to renew the said carving, and Mr. George Coates, the joiner's work, the expense of which was deducted from Messrs. Scott and Wallace's amount of contract. The doors were again inspected by Mr. S. Smirke, and ordered to be fixed forthwith; the original carving was then carefully packed up, "and sent to the place from whence it came."

The above are "stubborn facts," and as a convincing proof of the great superiority of the work executed by Messrs. Wolstenholme and Coates, the very rev. the dean and chapter have intrusted the execution of the new doors for the north-west tower to their care. The door is nearly finished, and will be fixed during the present month, when the public will be enabled to decide upon the merits or demerits of the respective works.

Justice demands the above explanation; and as you are a consistent enemy of trickery, and a staunch advocate of fairplay, I hope you will have the goodness to insert this letter in an early number of The Builder. — I am, Sir, &c. A Constant Reader.

York, Aug. 4, 1845.

BUILDERS' ESTIMATES.—CHARITY SCHOOLS OF ST. GILES' AND BLOOMSBURY.

Sir,—My attention has been called to a letter in The Builder of Saturday last, signed "J. S., Junr." (page 383), respecting a contract for some works now being performed at the School House of the Charity Schools of St. Giles' in the Fields and St. George Bloomsbury. I am surprised that the writer should have sent such a letter for the sole purpose, as it appears to me, of imputing to the committee of trustees of that charity, and to the architect (also a trustee, and a gentleman, who has for many years given his valuable and gratuitous services to the charity, both professionally and in other ways), improper motives in selecting the tender referred to. The facts are these; tenders were applied for to various parties, all, I believe, subscribers to the charity, for the works required; and the builders were requested to state separately the cost of the bricklayer's, carpenter's, and plasterer's works, and the cost of the painting. There were six tenders, as follows:—

			Bricklayers, &c.	Painting, &c.
A	£138	0 viz.	£80 8 and	£52 0
B (your correspondent)	136	0 ,,	72 0 ,,	64 0
C	160	0 ,,	115 0 ,,	45 0
D	135	14 ,,	91 10 ,,	44 4
E	99	5 ,,	75 15 ,,	23 10
F	..	.. ..	.. ..	39 0
G	99	0 ,,	73 0 ,,	26 0

The committee unanimously agreed to accept G's tender for all the works. Your correspondent, B, complains that the committee ought to have accepted his tender for bricklayers works &c., 72*l.*, as being 1*l.* under G's for that portion of the works, and E's tender of 23*l.* 10s., for painting, which together would have been 3*l.* 10s. under G's total. The trustees thought that under all circumstances it would be better to accept G's tender, that it would be inconvenient to have two sets of workmen, and that the difference of 3*l.* 10s. was too slight a set-off on that account.

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